

The Central Presbyterian.

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Central Presbyterian.

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TERMS:
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Richardson & Southall,
Editors and Proprietors.

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Unpublished Letter of William Wirt.

[A friend has placed in our hands two letters, the one written in 1818, and the other in 1829, by Mr. Wirt to the Rev. Dr. John H. Rice, and we are permitted to publish them. The first is found below, the second we shall publish next week. These letters were found among the papers of the late William Maxwell. Mr. Maxwell had a number of letters written by Mr. Wirt and other prominent men, but most of them were destroyed or carried off by the Federal soldiers during the late war, excepting the two now sent to us.—Eds. CEN. PRESS.]

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6th, 1818.

My Dear Mr. Rice:

Do you expect from me a labored apology for my silence, at which I know you would laugh, without believing one word of it, or shall I affect to fear that you will ascribe to a want of friendship, what I know you have long since set down to the true account of occupation in a great measure, and indolence for the rest? I shall do neither of these things. I might show great ingenuity and dexterity by the first, without commanding your confidence, and I might make a parade, by the last, of a trembling and apprehensive sensibility which I do not feel and which would be unworthy both of you and of me, if I did feel it: for it would imply, as to you, that I thought you of a jealous and suspicious temper towards your friends; and, as to me, that I consider myself an object of sufficient importance to excite your jealousy and suspicion, neither of which do I believe to be true. That friendship must be weakly kindled which requires continual fanning to keep it alive; and that, I flatter myself, is not the character of the sentiment which you have been so good as to express for me; in saying which I judge you by myself—a very unfit criterion to apply to you, I admit, in many other respects; but not a degrading one so far as mere human affections are concerned. I know how much I have lost by not having had it in my power to entitle myself to your correspondence—not only of amusement, but of instruction both for the head and the heart. Heaven knows how much I stand in need of both the last—and I thank Heaven that I am not yet so obdurate, but that I know something of it too. You do me great injustice if you believe me so plunged over head and ears in the affairs of this world, as to forget the next, or to be totally unmindful of that account which I am ere long to render as a man, a husband a father, a master, and a member of society. But I confess my want of firmness to endure, long, the contemplation of so awful a responsibility, and that I am too apt to seek relief from it by diverting my mind to other subjects—you need not tell me that this is wrong, for I know it—like poor Medea, "I know the right, yet still the wrong pursue." I do most devoutly wish you were stationed with us here—you would, I am sure, do much good. To be very candid with you, I do not think very highly of our preachers here—Mr. C— is said to be, and I have no doubt is, a very good man—but he is a very rough preacher, a Saracen in look and voice, and an overbearing dogmatist in his manner. He has nothing of Massillon's delicate and flexible, yet penetrating and searching probe—his effort seems to be to split the heart of adamant with a broad axe and by main force; and the edge of his axe turns, at every blow, without ever scarring the surface of the stone. He has none of those intellectual *menstrua* which are calculated to try and to dissolve hearts of different textures and degrees of hardness. He has none of that simple and unaffected kindness, which a savage only can resist, no particle of that native tenderness which conciliates and touches and melts the most hostile and flinty bosom, it is always and on every occasion the application of mere force—the *brutum fulmen*—and that you know will not do for sinners like myself. The younger Mr. B—is a fine young man—but young and rather meagre in point of information—not very deeply read in human

nature and not prolific in topics of conviction or persuasion—much inferior, I think, to our young Mr. Hoge—and beside Mr. B—is about to leave us. The old gentleman, Mr. B—and Mr. M—of Alexandria, whom I have heard in Georgetown, are on the other extreme again, too old and callous. There is a Mr. Laury, whose church is much closer to us than any of the rest; I have not heard him for two reasons, first because I understand he is not exactly orthodox, and secondly because I have been told by good judges that he is very theatrical; and the last I could never endure in the pulpit, although I am a friend both to high animation and to action, too, there; when it is the action of nature and springs spontaneously from the subject. I know that you are as well and even better acquainted with all those people than I am, but I am desirous that you should know my sentiments of them too, that I may, if possible, persuade you either to come yourself or to send some one who is qualified to labor with better effect, in this vineyard. I know that Paul may plant and Apollos may water, and I know too the divine hand from which alone the increase is to be expected, but it cannot be denied, I think, that something very natural depends on the mode, both of planting and watering. Don't say that I am hard to please, your modesty would hinder you from saying it, did not delicacy forbid my saying how much I have been pleased elsewhere. I think you have formed a mistaken opinion of the people here, so far as such a spiritually blind sinner as I, can judge; there is a good deal of piety, or at least of aptitude for, and propensity to, piety in this place. You were thinking of those corruptions which surrounded the courts of Europe, when you expressed this opinion, I apprehend. I can see nothing of it here. The manner of the President and of his cabinet are very plain, natural, and simple, and I do not see why ever they (and much less the sphere of which they are the nucleus) should be considered as given over to Dathan and Abiram. My children are in quite as moral and as religious a circle here as they were in Richmond, with two or three only exceptions in favor of the latter, with which I fear, however, they came too rarely into contact, there is private society to counteract the dissipating gaiety that more generally surrounded them. Pray let us hear something of Mrs. Rice's health. Miss Isabella Smith, who is on a visit to Laura, tells us that she saw her lately apparently quite well, which is very delightful. It has, in writing the last sentence, just crossed my mind that you will be the President of William and Mary College; by a chain of thought too rapid and extensive to be traced here. The mention of Laura, her Latin, a sentiment of the present President of that college as to the total idleness of a Latin education to any one but a professional man, which was communicated to me by a letter of last week; your more liberal, and, in my opinion, more just mode of thinking on that subject—you having heard Laura some of her lessons—his unfitness for the office, your peculiar fitness. I see the Episcopal objection, and I see the personal one too, from having devoted yourself to a different pursuit; but the legislature can overcome the first, and your patriotism, nay the very motive of general and religious utility, from which you are acting, the second. How inconvenient that the pen cannot follow up the mind. Performers on the piano are sometimes visited by fits of inspiration in which they play unpremeditated preludes of enchanting effect which they can never recall—and I saw some years back the announcement of a device by which the keystamped notes, in these impromptus, on a musically ruled sheet of paper placed over them. Can you devise any thing of this kind to catch and stamp the electric concatenations of the mind? I fear it is impossible. Yet who can fix a limit to the progress of this boldly inventive age? The problem is not much more difficult than that of perpetual motion, and one of the most distinguished (perhaps the most distinguished) American of the present age, has been heard to say that he sees nothing physically impracticable in that, i.e., perpetual motion. But enough, and I dare say, you will think too much of this—excuse it all.

Mother, Mrs. Wirt, Laura, your Elizabeth, and all the children unite with cordial sincerity in love to you, Mrs. Rice and Harriet: may I add to them that of your friend, in time, may I hope in eternity. WM. WIRT.

Mrs. Wirt says that young Mr. Balch is only going on a visit to Natchez, not to leave us permanently.

—It is indicative of the changes of opinion that "the Guardian, the conservative organ of English churchmen, has opened its columns for the discussion of the question of disestablishment. Its correspondents are singularly unanimous in maintaining that disestablishment is the only remedy for the Erastianism by which, in their opinion, the church is now afflicted. One writer contends that churchmen will do well to have the question settled as soon as possible, because better terms can be got now than at any future time."

For the Central Presbyterian.

Female Conversation.

LOUISVILLE, KY., Feb. 14th, '81.

Messrs. Editors,—If the women follow your suggestions in the last *Central*, and read the books you advise, they will be so much better informed than the society men with whom they have to associate, that they will find no congenial or appreciative associations. So stir the men up, and do not blame the women for all the short comings of mankind.

FEMALE SUBSCRIBER.

[We judge from the above that our fair correspondent in Louisville did not regard our remarks as confined in their application to Richmond.

We would add that we shall take "the men" up in due order. Eve, it will be remembered, was first in the fall.—Eds.]

For the Central Presbyterian.

Education.

To the Pastors and Brethren of our Southern Presbyterian Church:

Thursday, the 24th of February, is the day set apart for prayer for students in our colleges and seminaries. It is very important that every minister and member should lay this subject to heart. Our candidates are decreasing from year to year. The harvest is continually enlarging. Do we desire an increase of laborers? Then let us pray the Lord of the harvest that He would raise up more laborers and send them forth into his harvest. Let there be a universal, united, earnest petition for more laborers and for consecrated men. If it should not suit the convenience of all to observe the same day, still let it not be neglected. The particular day is not material so the hearts of God's people are set upon this, which we know is in accordance with his will.

The number of students aided by the Executive Committee of Education last year, was eighty-seven. This year it is seventy-seven. Thirty-one of these are in the Seminary course, and forty-six in Colleges and Universities. It will require \$8,475 to pay the appropriations. We are hopeful that our collections will enable us to do this. But we shall not be satisfied with that result. Some of our students surely need more, and many of our churches have contributed nothing to this cause during the present year. Just what we desire is this, that every pastor or stated supply will take up a collection for this cause: Let this be done, and whether the amount be large or small we know the desired result will be accomplished. We ask especially that the Chairman of Education in every Presbytery will stir up the churches that have not contributed. The Secretary will furnish a list of churches that have contributed to any one who will drop him a postal on the subject.

We take great pleasure in saying that some of the churches have done better than last year. Our appropriations are too small and ought to be increased. If every church will make a contribution this can easily be done. And is not this necessary before we can have an answer to our prayers? Why should we ask the Lord for an increase of laborers if we are unwilling to take care of those we have. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

E. M. RICHARDSON, Secretary.

G. W. MACRAE, Treasurer, 300 Front Street, Memphis, Tenn.

For the Central Presbyterian.

Circular.

To the Pastors, Sessions and Members of the Presbyterian Church:

Dear Brethren,—In reminding you of the Annual Collection for the cause of Publication, which is directed by the General Assembly to be taken up in all our churches on the first Sabbath of March, or as soon thereafter as possible, we invite your earnest attention to the following considerations:

1st. During the last three years and a half the debt resting upon this cause has been reduced from about \$60,000 (including principal and interest) to about \$10,000. This encourages hope of a speedy and entire relief from this burden.

2d. A limited increase in the contributions of the churches contributing would enable us to reach this much desired result the present year, or if all our churches, instead of about one half (as was the case last year), would contribute proportionately, the end would be accomplished.

3d. The work of gratuitous distribution of religious literature among our people, and the aid in this way of feeble churches, mission fields, and Sabbath-schools, is urgently needed; and so soon as this debt is removed, nearly all the funds contributed by the Church to the Publication cause can be used in this way, and the work be prosecuted with hope of larger results than ever before.

In view of these considerations we feel justified in pleading most earnestly for an increased contribution the present year. Will not every church and Sabbath-school that has been accustomed to contribute to this cause make a special effort to increase the amount at the approaching collection? And may we not hope that those which have hitherto failed to give will at this time extend their much needed aid?

In behalf of the Executive Committee of Publication.

JAS. K. HAZEN,
Secretary.

Richmond, Va., February 1, 1881.

For the Central Presbyterian.

Relief Fund.

The following report to the Executive Committee of Home Missions was received, approved and ordered to be published, at its meeting on February 1st:

"The Sub Committee on the Relief Scheme would report that they have carefully examined into its operations during the last year, and find them in all respects satisfactory. The losses have been larger than in any former year of its history, but all have been met out of the interest that has been received, so that the whole contributions, beyond its share of the expense account of Home Missions, have been invested in new securities, which have increased the total amount of these to \$34,000. The market value of these is in every instance above par and also above the price at which they were purchased, showing that the financial committee have discharged their duties judiciously and successfully. The larger losses during the year have not impaired its ability to meet its future engagements. On the contrary, this is greater than at any former period. Four years since, it was necessary to estimate that its future accumulations would be invested at six per cent interest, so as to make its probable receipts equal to its probable outlays. Two years afterward, this rate of interest was reduced to five and a half, and one year later to five per cent. But for the present valuation four and a half per cent has been used with the American experience table of mortality and a small surplus of assets over liabilities is yet maintained. The total liabilities are valued at \$35,325 41, while the assets, including bonds, cash and accrued interest are \$35,589 33, showing a surplus of \$263 92.

"This is small, but if the market price of the securities instead of their par value had been used in this calculation, the surplus would have been three or four thousand dollars larger. Some of the bonds belonging to this fund are worth twenty per cent. premium, others fifteen, and all would average nine or ten. On account of the action of the last General Assembly, no new applications have been accepted during the last year; but whether new additions shall be made or not, the ability to meet all future obligations cannot be doubted. It may be that some may abandon their contracts on account of the occurrences of the last year. The only calamity this will bring will be to those who shall withdraw, for every such withdrawal will increase the surplus on hand and lessen the number of those among whom its profits will be divided.

"We have great pleasure in making this favorable report, and congratulate the Executive Committee on the prosperity and success of the scheme of relief for the widows and orphans of our ministers on which they have bestowed so much labor and anxiety.

C. F. McCAY,
G. F. ANDERSON,
RICHARD MCLWAIN,
Committee."

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

Southern Presbyterian.

BERRYVILLE, CLARKE COUNTY, VA.,
February 15th, 1881.

Messrs. Editors.—Will you please publish the accompanying petition setting forth the needs of a struggling people, and permit me to add that this is done by me without the knowledge of my charge, to whom I have but recently come.

I think I can truthfully say of them that they are a people willing to do to the extent of their ability, and that they have on hand a work that is beyond their ability. The church building needs repairs and improvements to make it take rank in comparative respectability. The buildings of all our sister denominations being much superior in outward adorning and in comfort. All of the other churches have a minister's home attached, most of them beautiful and tasteful family residences.

The Presbyterians here have fully resolved that these things shall no longer be, and have undertaken at once to build a parsonage, indeed obligating themselves so to do in their contract with me, their newly elected pastor. We have proceeded to the extent of accepting a plan for the parsonage, and this week the building will be let. The people are determined to do the work, and it will be done without outside aid but I (from my standpoint) recognise the difficulties, and fear that the debt that they are assuming, and which for years must hang over them, will in time prove disastrous to the interest of Presbyterianism and cripple my usefulness, hence my appeal to the Church at large for aid.

PETITION.

Who will help the Presbyterians of Berryville, Clarke county, Va., to build this parsonage and repair their church building? And to what amount? Please all who want to aid in a good work respond by sending contributions to me, which will be thankfully received and timely acknowledged. I also ask my ministerial brethren who are favorably impressed, to let their people know of this.

A. B. CARRINGTON, Pastor.

Rev. N. M. Woods.—It will be seen from a notice in another column that a meeting of East Hanover Presbytery has been called to consider the question of dissolving the pastoral relation of Mr. Woods with the Second church of Norfolk, in order that he may accept a call to the First Presbyterian church of Galveston, Texas.

Rev. J. V. Worsham, recently of Missouri, has taken charge of Fort Valley and Perry Presbyterian churches, in Macon Presbytery, Ga.

Rev. Dr. J. W. Pratt, will supply the pulpit of the Second Presbyterian church, Louisville, Ky., (Dr. Stuart Robinson's) for some months.

Rev. J. W. Lupton, of Clarksville, Tenn., and Rev. N. M. Long, D. D., of Memphis, have both gone on a visit to Florida.

Gloucester C. H., Va.—At a congregational meeting held on the 16th inst., Rev. W. H. Robertson, who has been supplying the Gloucester church, was unanimously elected pastor. The church was organized last November with twenty-one members and two ruling elders, and has prospered since. The congregations are good and all the prospects encouraging. It is the first Presbyterian church organized in Gloucester county, which is one of the oldest counties of the State. The congregation will soon undertake the work of building a house of worship, an enterprise which will demand and deserve help from abroad.

Calah Church, North Carolina.—Messrs. Editors.—Sympathizers with church extension are still contributing to help build Calah church. Rev. C. M. Payne has recently sent me \$5; Mrs. James Williamson, \$5; Rev. C. Miller, \$1; Hon. A. M. Scales, \$5; Hon. W. C. Kerr, \$2; A Friend at Lowesville, N. C., \$1; and Dr. Chas. W. Dabney, Jr., \$5. Thanks to them all. We now lack only one hundred and fifty dollars of the amount required to build the house.

P. R. LAW.

Pittsboro', N. C., Feb. 16th, 1881.

Charleston Presbytery held a special meeting at Zion church, Glebe St., Charleston, S. C., on Tuesday, February 8th, at 7 o'clock P. M.

Rev. J. B. Mack, D. D., requested the dissolution of the pastoral relation existing between him and the First Presbyterian church of Columbia, S. C. Papers were presented from said church, showing their reluctant concurrence in this request, but yielding to Dr. Mack's sense of duty in accepting the position of Agent for the Columbia Theological Seminary, to which he had been unanimously appointed by the Board of Directors of that institution.

On motion of Dr. W. F. Junkin, the said pastoral relation was dissolved, and Rev. Geo. Howe, D. D., was appointed to declare the pulpit of the Columbia church vacant, at such time as may be convenient to him.

JOHN R. DOW, Stated Clerk.

Rev. J. L. Girardeau, D. D.—This eminent divine, from South Carolina, says the Marion (Ala.) *Commonwealth*, preached two most able and eloquent sermons in the Presbyterian church last Sabbath. Although scarcely past the meridian of life, he stands in the front rank of the ministry of the Southern Presbyterian Church. He has already occupied the chair as Moderator of the General Assembly, an honor conferred but once upon the same person. He has ably filled the Professorship of Theology in Columbia Theological Seminary, to which he was called a few years since by the most earnest solicitation of the General Assembly, seconded by the voice of the whole Church.

His visit here was in the interest of that venerable School of the Prophets, at the invitation of Dr. Raymond and his church session. The collection taken upon Sabbath morning without any previous notice, amounted to about \$115.

Those who contributed have given to a good cause, and it is believed that the Seminary Dr. Girardeau represents, and of whose faculty he is a worthy representative, will open its session in the fall with bright prospects.

Northern Presbyterian.

Thirty-one persons were added to the Olivet Presbyterian church, Twenty-second and Mount Vernon streets, Philadelphia, the Rev. L. Y. Graham pastor, on Sabbath, February 6th. These are the partial fruits of a quiet work of grace which has been in progress for several weeks. Many others are interested upon the subject of personal salvation, and will doubtless unite at the next communion. The attendance upon all church services is greatly increased, and every department of church work is much quickened by the presence of the Spirit.

The Evanston Presbyterian church, near Chicago, Dr. Noyes pastor, has received at the last two communions, forty-one new members, of whom twenty-seven were on profession of faith.

Faith chapel, in Baltimore, makes a good report of work done. It is fostered by the care and help of the First Presbyterian church and the Rev. J. P. Campbell. A large and convenient chapel has been built, and all indebtedness discharged. The Sabbath School, of which Mr. J. V. L. Graham is superintendent, has 1,314 scholars and sixty seven teachers, and is effectively administered. A church building, it hoped, will be soon begun.

A Presbyterian pastor in Pittsburgh said to have read an advertisement of her Majesty's Opera Company, laying especial emphasis on that portion relating to a full ball and to warn his congregation to give the lie to the assertion that Christians attended such performances.

A note from Dr. Fisher, President of Hanover College, says:—"The College neighborhood have been deeply and wimovied by the Spirit of God. Already an accession has been made to the church. Rev. H. M. Morey, of Indianapolis, has preached and labored most effectively in these serv The Day of Prayer for Colleges was prominent Christians ought to make more of it."

(Continued on 5th page.)